1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

During the festival of Kētrappa at Benglor the Poleyas may not be
seen by any high caste villager till the eighteenth day of the festival, 621
but on the eighteenth evening they march in procession with 796
pipe and drum to the Kētrappa temple and watch the ritual from 776
a nearby knoll. They bring offerings of fowls to Kētrappa, and the
birds are decapitated by Mēdas, who have an important part in
the festival. The Kētrappa festival seems to be an extreme instance
of the exclusion of Poleyas. In the festivals of other village-deities
they participate to a greater extent, though on a different level
from the rest.

Every village has an hereditary headman called *takka*. It is the 622
headman's duty to see that the village greens (*mandus*) where [364]
dances and dinners are held, and the village assembly meets, are [363]
kept in good condition. He has to ensure that the bridges and
ferries in the village are in constant repair and that the village [485]
tank is clean. He has to look after pilgrims and travellers passing
through the village.

Coorgs have a keen appreciation of leadership and precedence. 622
From their folklore it appears as though they are incapable of 829
conceiving of any group, of no matter what, without a leader. The
epithet consistently applied to a headman is '*mūpayanda*' which
means 'precedence-having'. A sense of precedence and respect for
seniority helped to introduce order into their meetings, just as a
respect for precedents produced a consistent body of decisions on
any particular matter.

Formerly a headman wielded great influence in his village (or 622
nāḍ), and a good headman was a powerful factor for stability. If the 623
headman was a bad man, the entire village was ruined: as a pro- [539]
verb has it, 'when the *takka* is a loafer the entire village is like the
area inhabited by Untouchables'. In the management of village
affairs and the settlement of village disputes the headman was
assisted by an assembly consisting of the representatives of the
various *okkas* in the village. The assembly was called *kūṭa*, which
means a 'gathering' or 'group'. It met on one of the several greens [367]
in the village. There were separate village greens for transacting
business (*panchāyati mandu*), for dancing at the harvest festival
(*ūr mandu*), a third for dancing at the festival of the village-deity
(*dēvara mandu*), and so on. Sometimes there was a roofed enclosure [344]
(*ambala*) on the green, which provided shelter from rain and sun for
the assembly to meet, and for women to watch the dances.

The village-assemblies were far more powerful in the past than 623
681